

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 02394 091224Z

50

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 OMB-01 SAM-01 /061 W

----- 052685

O R 090948Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9324

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2394

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS

SUBJECT: ROK VIEWS ON VIET-NAM

REF: SEOUL 2254

1. AS IMPACT OF INDOCHINA SINKS IN, ROK PRESS IS  
DISPLAYING INCREASING NERVOUSNESS OVER LIKELY EFFECT  
ON KOREA. COLD WAR FEARS OF COMMUNIST GRAND DESIGN  
FOR ASIA ARE IMPLICIT IN PRESS' REAFFIRMATION OF BELIEF  
IN DOMINO THEORY AND CONCERN THAT PRC IS BEHIND MOVES  
TO COMMUNIZE INDOCHINA, PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, MALAYSIA,  
AND SINGAPORE. PRESS REQUIRES NO GREAT EFFORT TO SEE  
RECENT NORTH KOREAN ACTIONS, SUCH AS DMZ TUNNELS AND  
MIG FLIGHT NEAR NORTHWEST ISLANDS, AS EVIDENCE OF RENEWED  
NORTH KOREAN DETERMINATION TO PROBE SOUTHWARD, INSPIRED  
BY COMMUNIST SUCCESSES AND US ALOOFNESS IN INDOCHINA.  
THIS LOGIC UNDERSCORED BY PRESS ATTENTION TO APRIL 4  
JACK ANDERSON COLUMN EXPRESSING SIMILAR CONCERNS.

2. IN DISCUSSING WHAT ROK CAN DO ABOUT INCREASED NORTH  
KOREAN THREAT, PRESS NOTES THAT COLLAPSE OF GVN AND  
GKR POSITIONS IS DUE BOTH TO US INDIFFERENCE AND TO  
INTERNAL WEAKNESSES OF INDOCHINESE REGIMES. TO AVERT  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SEOUL 02394 091224Z

FORMER IN ROK CASE, PRESS CALLS FOR ASSURANCES OF

US COMMITMENT TO MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY AND MODERNIZATION PLAN. SOME ASSURANCE IS SEEN IN RECENT STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY SCHLESINGER, AS WELL AS IN COMMENT APRIL 8 BY FONMIN KIM DONG JO THAT "HIGH-LEVEL AMERICAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER, WHOM I MET RECENTLY, REASSURED ME THAT THE AMERICAN DEFENSE COMMITMENT TO KOREA WOULD IN NO WAY UNDERGO CHANGE DESPITE THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN KHMER AND SOUTH VIET-NAM". HOWEVER, PRESS REMAINS OPENLY SKEPTICAL OF USG ABILITY TO CARRY OUT ITS GOOD INTENTIONS, POINTING OUT THAT "THIS EXPRESSED FIRM STAND OF THE US ADMINISTRATION WITH RESPECT TO ITS SECURITY COMMITMENTS ABROAD HAS TO BE AS EXPLICITLY ENDORSED AND SUCCEDED BY THE US CONGRESS AND THE MAERICAN PEOPLE" (KOREA HERALD).

3. FEELING OF UNCERTAINTY OVER EXTENT OF US SUPPORT HAS LED MOST PAPERS TO CALL FOR INCREASE IN SELF-RELIANCE AND STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL UNITY AS BEST HOPE FOR RESISTING NORTH KOREA. NEED TO AVOID INTERNAL WEAKNESS SUCH AS AFFLICTS INDOCHINESE NATIONS HAS BEEN VARIOUSLY INTERPRETED. TONGA ILBO SAID "IF ROKG LOSES FAITH OF ITS PEOPLE AS GKR AND GVN DID THROUGH SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, IT MAY CAUSE SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND CORRUPTION ... NATIONAL HARMONY IS ESSENTIAL BUT WE CAN'T ACHIEVE IT WITHOUT PUBLIC CONSENSUS, WHICH REQUIRES FREEDOM OF SPEECH." HOWEVER, MOST PAPERS APPEAR INCLINED MORE TOWARD PUBLIC ROKG VIEW OF SITUATION AND ITS REQUIREMENTS, STATED IN EXTREME BY SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG SHINMUN, WHICH CONTINUED:

"TO PREVENT ANOTHER VERSION OF VIETNAM WAR WE MUST ERADICATE ALL INTERNAL CONFUSION WHICH HINDERS OUR NATIONAL HARMONY AND SOLIDARITY."

4. IN GENERAL, ROK PRESS, WHILE IT MAY NOT AS A WHOLE ENDORSE THE MORE RADICAL ROKG MOVES, DOES CONVEY CONVICTION THAT SOME SELF-SACRIFICING MEASURES ARE CALLED FOR ON PART OF KOREAN PEOPLE. AT SAME TIME, PRESS EXHIBITS UNDERLYING LACK OF CONFIDENCE THAT EVEN STRONG CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 02394 091224Z

DRIVE TOWARD SELF-RELIANCE WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO ENABLE ROK TO SURVIVE WITHOUT TANGIBLE SUPPORT OF US.

5. PRIVATELY, OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH KOREANS IN VARIOUS FIELDS INDICATE THAT SOUTHEAST ASIAN DEVELOPMENTS HAVE HAD A DEEP AND GENERALLY DEPRESSING EFFECT. MOST OBSERVERS ARE QUICK TO SEE THE DEBACLE AS HAVING SOME IMPACT ON THE SECURITY OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA. MOST OF THE LESS SOPHISTICATED THINK

IMMEDIATELY IN TERMS OF AN UPSURGE IN THE THREAT FROM THE NORTH, A POINT OF VIEW WHICH MANY GOVERNMENTAL FIGURES ARE INCLINED TO EMPHASIZE. THOSE WHO TEND TO BE CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT (AND THIS INCLUDES SOME CONNECTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS OPPOSITION FIGURES) ARE ALSO CONCERNED THAT PRESIDENT PARK WILL USE THE SOUTHEAST ASIA EXPERIENCE TO TIGHTEN CONTROL AT HOME (REFTEL).

6. AS FAR AS CAUSES FOR THE DEBACLE ARE CONCERNED, OPINIONS ARE MIXED. MANY HOLD THAT IT RESULTED FROM THE FAILURE OF THE US TO HONOR ITS COMMITMENT TO AN ALLY. OTHERS (INCLUDING INFLUENTIAL DRP MEMBERS, A TONGA ILBO EDITORIAL WRITER, AND A MARINE BRIGADIER GENERAL, TO CITE A FEW), BELIEVE THAT VIETNAMESE AND KHMER TROUBLES ARE LARGELY ATTRIBUTABLE TO CORRUPT AND INEFFICIENT GOVERNMENTS, POOR ORGANIZATION, AND A GENERAL LACK OF POPULAR WILL TO RESIST THE COMMUNISTS. THESE OBSERVERS ARE CONVINCED THAT KOREA DOES NOT SUFFER FROM THESE SHORTCOMINGS AND WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT THE USG, THE CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WILL BE AWARE OF THESE DIFFERENCES AND BE WILLING TO CONTINUE US COMMITMENT TO KOREA. SNEIDER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 APR 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975SEOUL02394  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750123-0321  
**From:** SEOUL  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750466/aaaacjdt.tel  
**Line Count:** 136  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 SEOUL 2254  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 15 JUL 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <15 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <18 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ROK VIEWS ON VIET-NAM  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PINT, KS, XC  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006